

Washington School Governance Council1 By Laws (adopted 11.19.13)

Preamble

It is the policy of the Manchester Board of Education (Board) to endorse and support parent, staff, student and community involvement in school governance. It is the intent of the Board that Washington Elementary School will have a School Governance Council that enables parents, school staff, and community to work together in facilitating quality educational plans that engender continuous improvement of student achievement. It is the responsibility of the Principal to develop and maintain effective organizational structures and processes for advisement in the school in conjunction with the School Governance Council.

Article I: Name

The name of this Council is the Washington School Governance Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council" organized under the authority of the state reform law, Public Act 10-111, as codified in Section 21(g).

Article II: Purpose

The Council provides an opportunity for stakeholders in Washington Elementary School to craft a productive collaboration to support student success. The intent of the Council is to enable parents, school staff, and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement in the local school setting. The School Governance Council shall counsel the Principal regarding all matters related to the operation of the school with the exception of those matters such as personnel performance.

Article III: Membership

Section 1 Number and Qualifications

The Council shall represent the diverse interests of the families and staff that make up the local school community. Every effort, therefore, shall be made to engage broad participation in the Council election process. To meet statutory requirements, the Council will consist of fourteen (14) voting members.

Members of the Council shall include:

- a. Seven (7) parents or guardians of students currently enrolled in Washington Elementary School as voting members. Parents nominated for Council membership must have a child enrolled in the school for the current school year to be included on the ballot.
- b. Five (5) teachers at the school as voting members.
- c. Two (2) community leaders within the school District as voting members.
- d. One (1) Principal of the school or his/her designee as a non-voting member.

Section 2 Term of Office/Tenure

- a. Voting members shall serve for a term of two years. No voting member of the Council shall serve more than three consecutive terms.
- b. The term of office for all Council members shall begin as of November 1 of the school year in which they were elected
- c. In order to avoid having the terms of all Council members expire at the same time, the first elections shall create staggered terms of office. Council members receiving the most votes in their category shall serve two-year terms. At the first regular meeting of the Council, each member's current term of office shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 3 *Resignation*

Any Council member may withdraw from the Council by delivering to the Principal or the Chairperson or Secretary of the Council a written resignation, or by giving verbal resignation during a regular meeting of the Council. Such verbal or written notice of the resignation shall be recorded in the official meeting minutes.

Section 4 *Removal*

The Council may, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all its members, suspend or expel a member.

Section 5 *Compensation*

Council members shall not receive any remuneration to serve on the Council or its committees.

Section 6 *Vacancy*

The office of Council member shall be automatically vacated:

- a. If a member resigns,
- b. If a member is removed by action of the Council pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, or
- c. If a member no longer meets the qualifications for membership specified by these Bylaws.

Any vacancy on the Council will be filled for the remainder of the un-expired term utilizing the election process. An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within sixty (60) days (not counting July and August) of the date of the resignation, removal, or disqualification; unless there are ninety (90) days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy will remain unfilled until a replacement is selected by normal election processes as stated in these Bylaws.

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 1 *Selection Process*

- a. The parent/guardian members (7) of the Council shall be elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school. Each household with a student attending the school will have one vote.
- b. Nominations should begin by October 10th and voting should conclude by October 31st.
- c. The school Principal may enlist an election committee to assist in conducting the election. The committee could:
 1. Schedule dates,
 2. Post announcements,
 3. Collect nominations,
 4. Set up, administer in, and oversee the election process, and
 5. Formally announce the results.
 6. Representatives of existing groups shall be enlisted to help with the election process. (Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Teachers' Union.)
 7. The teacher members (5) of the Council shall be elected by the teachers of the school.
 8. The community leaders (2) of the Council shall be elected by the parent/guardian members and teacher members of the Council.

Section 2 *Election Process*

A valid election process should include the following activities:

1. Election Committee

- a. The Principal may enlist an election committee to assist in conducting the election schedule dates, post announcements, collect nominations, set up and administer the voting itself and formally announce the results.

2. Call for Nominations for Parents and Teachers

- a. A call for nominations should be sent to all parents or guardians in the school to nominate themselves or other parents or guardians for the available positions on the Council. This should begin by October 10th. Every effort shall be made to provide nomination and election material in a language they understand.
- b. A parent is a person who is the natural, adoptive or stepparent of a child enrolled in the school and includes those people acting as legal guardian or registered custodian of the child, such as grandparents.
- c. A call for nominations should also be sent to all teachers at the school to nominate themselves or others for the five positions on the Council. This should begin by October 10th. A nomination process should be conducted followed by a ballot. Teachers are those certified staff who perform the majority of their duties in a teaching capacity at that school. Paraprofessionals are not eligible to serve as teacher members of the Council.)
- d. The election committee or principal shall verify that those nominated are eligible and willing to serve.

3. Voting

- a. The ballot for the parent election should be distributed to each household. Each household of students enrolled in the school for the current school year will receive one ballot. The ballot for the teacher election shall be distributed to all teachers. All voting for parents and teachers should conclude by October 31st.
- b. The ballot for the parent election shall be sent to each household by a reliable distribution method.
- c. If more than one family resides at the same location, each family should be sent their own ballot. Parents/guardians are eligible to vote for parent representatives. A household can cast a vote for each open parent seat on the Council. In the first election, all seven seats are open.
- d. The official ballot shall be duplicated on school letterhead, with the ballots numbered sequentially.
- e. To ensure maximum participation, parents and teachers should be given sufficient time and multiple opportunities to cast their ballot - whether through dropping the ballot off at the school, returned by the student to the classroom teacher, or through the U.S. mail.
- f. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the voting process will continue the following school year for unfilled seats and for seats vacated for any reason.

4. Results

- a. Immediately following the election, ballots should be counted with supervision by the election committee or at least a school administrator, one parent and one teacher who are unaffiliated with any candidates.
- b. The Principal should announce the results and post the new membership of the council on the school's website.
- c. To avoid having the terms of all Council members expire at the same time, the first elections may/shall create staggered terms of office, using a lottery system. Then an election process shall continue each year.

5. Community Members of the Council

- a. After the parent and teacher members are elected by their representative groups, they shall then elect the community members who will serve on the Council.
- b. A community member shall be anyone who resides in the Manchester school district or has a business or civic interest in the area. The parent and teacher representatives shall determine a process for soliciting interest from community members. *(The aforementioned Election Committee could be utilized to also assist in the selection of the nominees for consideration by the Council members. Community representatives interested in participating on the Council could make their interest known at an open meeting of the Council.)*

6. Principal

- a. The Principal shall participate directly as a nonvoting member of the Council.
- b. The role of the Principal in terms of authority and responsibility for school management is not changed by the institution of this Council. Ultimately, the Principal is responsible and accountable to the Superintendent of Schools.

Article V: Officers/Responsibilities/Election/Term of Office

Section 1 *Officers*

1. The officers of the school Governance Council shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and other officers the Council may deem desirable.
2. The **Chairperson** shall:
 - a. Prepare an agenda for each meeting and publically post the agenda on the school office bulletin board (and on the school's website) 72 hours in advance of each meeting of the School Governance Council.
 - b. Preside at all meetings of the Council.
 - c. Sign all letters, reports and other communications of the Council.
 - d. Perform all duties incident to the office of the Chairperson.
 - e. Have other such duties as are prescribed by the Council.
3. The Vice-Chairperson shall:
 - a. Represent the Chairperson in assigned duties.
 - b. Substitute for the Chairperson in his or her absence.
 - c. Perform such other duties as to be assigned by the Chairperson or the School Governance Council.
4. The Secretary shall:
 - a. Act as clerk of the Council.
 - b. Keep minutes of all regular and special meetings of the school site Council, including attendance, summary reports, and all votes in a book to be kept for that purpose.
 - c. Transmit true and correct copies of the minutes of such meetings to members of the Council and to the person in charge of the school website.
 - d. Provide all notices in accordance with these bylaws.
 - e. Be custodian of the records of the Council and have them posted on the school's website.
 - f. Keep a register of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of each member of the Council and others with whom the Council has regular dealings, as furnished by those persons.
 - g. Perform other such duties as are assigned by the Chairperson or the Council.

Section 2 *Election of Officers and Terms of Office*

- a. The officers shall be elected annually at the first meeting of the school year (November) after the election of council members and shall serve for one year, or until each successor has been elected. The Principal shall conduct the process of election of officers, as needed.
- b. A vacancy in any office at any time and from any cause shall be filled for the unexpired term at the next meeting of the Council. A Council member does not have to be present at a meeting in order to be elected as an officer.
- c. Officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the Council.

Section 3 *Executive Committee*

The officers of the Council (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary) shall comprise the Executive Committee of the Council.

Article VI: Duties of Council Members

The members of the Council are accountable to their constituents and shall:

- a. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- b. Regularly attend and participate in Council meetings.
- c. Participate in information and training programs.
- d. Act as a link between the Council and the community.
- e. Encourage participation of parents and others in the school community.

Article VII: Committee

The Council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purpose as it deems helpful or necessary in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Council enumerated in these bylaws. No such committee, study group or task force may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 1 *Selection of Committee Members*

Unless otherwise determined by the Council, the Council Chairperson shall appoint members of standing or special committees. A vacancy on a committee shall be filled by appointment made by the Chairperson.

Section 2 *Terms of Office*

The Council shall determine the terms of office for members of a committee.

Section 3 *Committee Membership*

The Council may establish and abolish subcommittees of its own membership to perform duties as shall be prescribed by Council. At least one member representing teachers and one member representing parents shall make up the subcommittee. No subcommittee may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 4 *Quorum*

A majority of the members of the committee (including the principal, if applicable) shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise determined by the Council. The act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of the committee, provided a quorum is in attendance.

Section 5 *Committee Rules*

Each committee may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these bylaws or rules adopted by the Council or Board of Education policies.

All committees of the Council shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Section 6 *Record Keeping*

All committees shall keep records of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the Principal's office, on the school's website and available at all times to the Council members. The minutes shall include the names of committee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and committee recommendations.

Section 7 *Reporting Responsibilities*

Committee Chairpersons will present work plans and recommendation to the Council for approval. Each committee may make a report through its Chairperson at each regular meeting of the Council.